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Christian Courier

A Reformed Weekly

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February 13, 1998

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New youth prison offers 'one big therapy group'

Alan Doerksen

FREDERICTON, N.B. — An innovative new prison offering therapeutic rehabilitation for young offenders is the latest in a series of prison reforms by the New Brunswick government. The New Brunswick Youth Centre, which opened in the city of Miramichi in January, was built partly in reaction to a sex scandal which happened several years ago at the former young offenders facility in Kingsclear, near Fredericton.

"Kingsclear's slated for absolute closure by the end of March," says Brian Saunders, executive director of the New

Brunswick branch of the John Howard Society. He explains that "the name Kingsclear acquired a bad reputation in the province" because of the sex scandal which happened there.

Four years ago, Carl Toft, a former guard at Kingsclear, was convicted of sexual assault of several young offenders at the facility. Toft "was a homosexual pedophile," Saunders asserts. "He abused dozens of children." Toft is currently serving time in prison.

Because of the Toft affair, the N.B. government has decided to close the Kingsclear facility "to

See NEW page 2...



An artist's conception of the New Brunswick Youth Centre

Moscow priest not allowed to popularize gospel



Priests in the Russian Orthodox Church are expected to use Church Slavonic as liturgical language.

Russian Orthodox patriarchate resents fresh winds

MOSCOW (Keston News Service) — As of early January 1998, Father Georgi Kochetkov is still unable to serve as priest in his parish of the Feast of the Dormition. He was ousted from a neighboring parish four years ago by extreme conservative forces within the Russian Orthodox Church.

Despite much criticism from fellow Moscow clergy during the past few years, the parishes led by Father Georgi have flourished and the numbers attending services have increased. Much of the criticism was directed against his use of a russified liturgical language in place of the usual Church Slavonic, and against other liturgical changes such as encouraging the congregation to participate in the liturgy by breaking down the division between sanctuary and people, and speaking aloud certain prayers which by tradition were said silently by the priest.

On April 18 of last year, a young priest, Father Mikhail Dubinsky, was appointed to Father Georgi's parish of the Feast of the Dormition. Almost at once this priest began to cause trouble. He would sit when the Gospel was read in Russian and stand when it was read in Church Slavonic, and he would interrupt the sermon. Then, on May 6, he went as far as reconsecrating the bread and wine, an act which amounted to denying the validity of the celebrant's (i.e., Father Georgi Kochetkov's) words and actions.

Parishioners believe Fr. Mikhail was acting under instructions from reactionary forces

within the Moscow Patriarchate and was appointed with the deliberate intention of disrupting the parish's life.

On Sunday, June 29, Father Mikhail began to behave strangely. According to Father Georgi and others present in the sanctuary, he began rushing about during matins as though deranged. (All that happened in the sanctuary was recorded on video.)

Diagnosed as psychotic

Without Father Georgi's permission a parishioner called an ambulance, and the militia were called by monks from the next-door Sretensky Monastery.

A psychiatrist who accompanied the ambulance diagnosed Father Mikhail as psychotic and See RUSSIAN page 3...

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News

New prison has innovative design, programs

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 make a clean break," even though the buildings are not worn out, says Saunders.

By the end of March, all young offenders from Kingsclear and a second facility in Saint John, N.B., will be transferred to the new prison.

Cottage-style living

Structurally, the new facility does not look much like a prison. It features four cottage-style living units, each of which accommodates about 25 people. The New Brunswick Solicitor General's office describes the complex as "a secure yet open physical environment which encourages one-on-one contact and counselling." Each cottage normally operates independently, partly to avoid violence which might erupt if large groups of offenders are together at one time.

Instead of barbed wire and steel bars, the facility uses plexiglass and a steel superstructure to link the buildings together and to secure the complex. It includes a chapel, a

medical centre, a soccer field, gym and two small suites where offenders can stay with family members for a few days at a time.

The province originally hired Wackenut Corrections Corporation, an American firm, to build and run the new facility. But the idea of a company running a prison for profit became a controversial issue in the 1995 provincial election, so the government changed the arrangement, says Saunders.

Instead, Wackenut kept its construction deal and built the \$20 million complex, which the province will rent for \$2.2 million a year for 25 years. After the contract, the province can buy the complex for a nominal fee. The deal leaves the province in control of the prison.

But the main difference in the new prison is not its structure, but its rehabilitation program. The province has hired Portage New Brunswick, a non-profit group known mostly for its work with addiction recovery, to apply its program to young offenders in the new prison.

COURTESY N.B. SOLICITOR GENERAL'S OFFICE



New Brunswick Solicitor General Jane Barry initiated the province's prison reform process two years ago.

The Portage Program for Drug Dependencies is a Montreal-based non-denominational agency that runs treatment centres in New Brunswick, Quebec and Ontario. Its program is based on the "therapeutic community model" and focuses on group therapy and peer support. Portages six- to eight-month program begins with a voluntary commitment and builds on a participant's strong desire for rehabilitation. Its goals for young offenders (aged 12 to 18) are:

- to teach them to shape values they can respect and trust;
- to help them develop a realistic perception of their life situations and increase self-respect;
- to help them develop positive ways of meeting their needs rather than seeking escape through drugs.

Peer support

Portage achieves these goals through a residential program involving qualified staff and other young offenders who offer peer support. Different kinds of group therapy are used to help participants change their behavior and attitudes. Meetings with parents of young offenders help the parents discuss their situation, receive support from others and become a resource for participants. A follow-up clinic is also provided for one year following the therapy.

Montreal-based Portage director Michael Vamos says the New Brunswick Youth Centre is the first correctional facility to base its entire rehabilitation program on the principle of group therapy. "We consider it a courageous undertaking by the province," he says.

Portage staff will be training the centre's staff in its techniques for six months, explains Mary Ellen Martin, manager of quality assurance for Portage New Brunswick. After that, Portage staff will continue to offer consultation to the centre.

Portage's program has been used to an extent at the Saint John young offender facility since 1995, and is also in use at an adult prison in Kingston, Ont., Martin observes. Suzanne Johnston, the former director of the Saint John prison, introduced the Portage program there and has now become director of the Miramichi prison.

Academic training is an essential part of the Portage pro-

gram, says Martin. "There is a spiritual aspect, but it's not the focus," she adds, comparing Portage with the well-known 12 Steps program for recovery from addictions. But Martin notes that Portage's staff encourage participants to have church involvement.

"Our program is very intensive," says Martin. A participant's day will be highly structured, starting about 6:30 a.m. and finishing at 10 p.m. There will be no TVs for young offenders.

Not a 'boot camp'

Saunders describes the Portage program as being "like one big therapy group.... Everybody that's in that facility is involved in the recovery of the kids. Kids who are further along with the recovery help those who are less [far] along."

Saunders is supportive of the Portage program, noting, "the old approach led to the Toft affair."

Saunders toured the centre last November, shortly before it opened, and asserts, "It's not a 'boot camp.' It's quite an impressive facility. There was a lot of attention to detail to make it as non-institutional as possible."

Several John Howard Society staff were impressed enough to accept jobs at the new centre, says Saunders. His agency has been consulted about the programming at the new centre and recently opened a new office in the Miramichi area.

Prison population has dropped

Saunders is positive about the province's prison reforms, which have focused on better rehabilitation and more community service for offenders, rather than prison time. In the past few years, the province's prison population has dropped from 475 to about 300, he notes.

Robbie O'Neill, communications officer for the Solicitor General's department, says the centre was "designed and built as it was proposed." The province's prison reforms are "going into the last year [of the three-year reform process], and everything's on time and on schedule."

But he notes that the government has decided not to go ahead with one controversial measure it had considered: electronic monitoring of the whereabouts of offenders while on parole. "It was not deemed to be necessary," says O'Neill.



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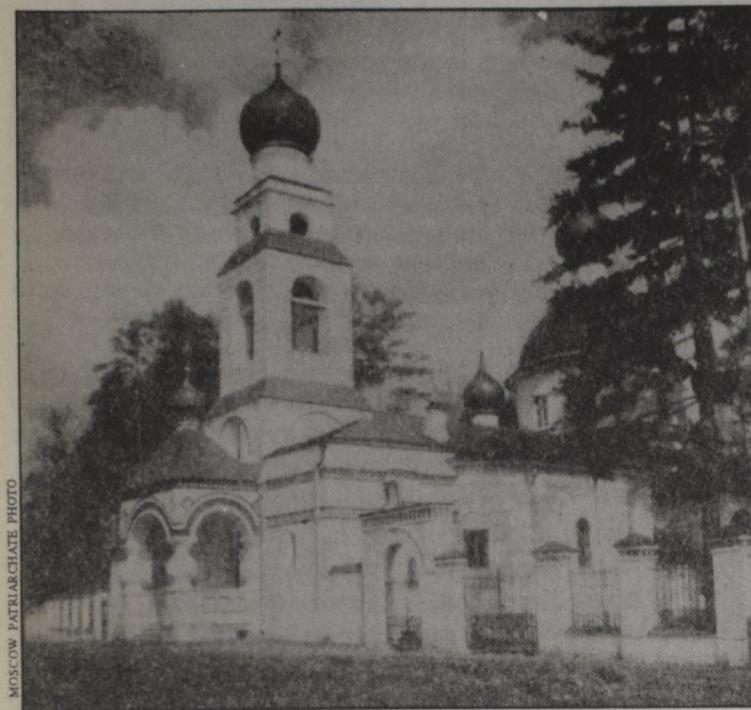
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FEBRUARY 13, 1998

News

Russian militia issues false reports about priest



MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE PHOTO
The Russian Orthodox Patriarchal Residence at Perekopino, near Moscow.

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recommended that he be hospitalized immediately. A parishioner with 30 years' experience as a psychiatric nurse agreed with the doctor's recommenda-

tion.

The militia report mentioned nothing about violence being used against Father Mikhail, although since these events Father Georgi stated that another

militia report, which he called "tendentious, unjust and untrue," had been produced by the Moscow Patriarchate claiming that Father Mikhail had been beaten up.

Honest confessions

On October 13, Father Georgi Kochetkov received from Patriarch Aleksy a *ukaz* (edict) banning him from serving as a priest. The edict also excluded from the eucharist 12 parish members of the Feast of the Dormition.

That same day, Father Georgi and the laity mentioned by name in the *ukaz* went to the diocesan pastor for confession, in order, they said, not to violate ecclesiastical peace and to obey the demands of the Patriarch's edict.

But they could not repent of and confess to "violence and ridiculing" as demanded by the Patriarch, as this would have been false witness, explained Viktor Kott, one of the 12. The 13 each confessed what their consciences told them to.

The October 13 edict assigned Father Mikhail to another Mos-

cow church and replaced Father Georgi with Father Oleg Klemenshev at the Feast of the Dormition. The parish council also had to be elected anew since the former council members were mentioned in the *ukaz*.

Kott said the parish was still unified and that teaching at the independent Sretenye college continued with Father Georgi as its director. This college and the catechism school, although registered as Orthodox educational bodies, are not parish institutions.

This distinction is causing troubles because although the *ukaz* gave the new priest, Father Oleg, leadership over all parish domains, the college, school and Sretenye Brotherhood, founded before even Father Georgi's ministry began at Feast of the Dormition, do not consider themselves subject to the new priest.

On January 8, Father Georgi

and the 12 parishioners sent notes to Patriarch Aleksy stating they had made their confession, though not of false charges, and were at peace with all. They asked him to cancel the ban.

In the meantime, a patriarchate resolution ruled that the 13 were not subordinating themselves to the *ukaz* and that the Sretenye Brotherhood, college and catechism school were deprived of the Patriarch's blessing (which, depending upon interpretation, can mean he forbids them).

Father Georgi and the 12 wrote back immediately, stating again that these institutions had not been registered under the parish of the Feast of the Dormition, but the letter writers have received no answer as of January 8.

Father Georgi and the 12 parishioners plan to keep their institution open and await a reply to their most recent letter.

Lutheran mission wins round in Khakassia

Lawrence A. Uzzell

LONDON, England (KNS) — The threat against the Lutheran mission in the republic of Khakassia, 2500 miles east of Moscow, has receded once again — but has still not disappeared.

In a surprise move, the Court of Arbitration for Khakassia has chosen not to consider a lawsuit filed by the republic's procuracy, which sought annulment of the church's registration. The court heard two days of arguments from both the Lutherans and their opponents, then abruptly announced on Jan. 30 that the issue does not lie within its jurisdiction. The procurator's office plans to appeal.

Unexpected

In a Feb. 3 telephone interview with Keston News Service, the Lutherans' Deacon Pavel Zayakin said that the court's announcement was "unexpected both for us and for the procurator."

He said that the court had realized "that this is not a simple affair" and had "chosen the smartest option for itself."

The procurator's office, he said, may now choose to file a case with a court of general jurisdiction rather than with the

arbitration court, which usually handles business disputes. If that happens, the procurator will have to file charges directly against the Lutherans rather than suing the republic's Ministry of Justice for having allegedly mishandled the mission's registration.

Pastor Vsevolod Lytkin of the

Lutherans' mother church in Novosibirsk charged in a Feb. 2 press release that it is "clear from private conversations and from information received by ELMK (Evangelical-Lutheran Mission of Khakassia) counsel, that this whole matter was inspired by Khakassian FSB (formerly the KGB) officials."

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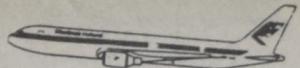
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Editorial

What was that Valentine's Day card all about?

I always thought that Valentine's Day was for lovers. I know that school kids hand out Valentine cards or hearts by the dozens and expect that many back, each one claiming a special love for the recipient. But what do teenagers and adults do?

The Valentine card racks in a nearby card store tell me that you can give a Valentine card to anyone. Here are some of the categories card companies work with: Dad, Mom, wife, husband, sister, brother, teacher, godparents, sweetheart, granddaughter, grandson, baby, babysitter ...; the list goes on. You can wish *anyone* a Happy Valentine's Day. Of course, that does not mean that you confess a special love to everyone who gets a Valentine.

You can even have your cat lick up to you on Valentine's day: "The cat hopes your Valentine's Day will be the kind that suits you purr-fectly!" And then there's one that's called "Money Holder" which allows you to stick some bills in the card for the object of your affections.

It's interesting to see what companies come up with as texts for that special lover. A

"Sweetheart" card reads:

*With every day that passes by
your love means more to me —
it gives a meaning to my life
I never knew could be.
Your love has brightened every day
like sunshine from above.
You gave me all I need to live
By giving me your love.*

If the poetry weren't so bad I would recommend it as a hymn, with its religious overtones (only God can give you all you need to live).

Careful selection

Valentine's Day is one of the more harmless activities we engage in as a commercialized society, if you don't count the sweets that sweethearts are encouraged to consume. It's not like Christmas: you don't have to bring Christ back into Valentine's Day (because he was never in it) and you can't say that they have commercialized Valentine's Day since that is all the day really is (though it does hint at least two early saints named Valentine).

I asked a young lady carefully checking out various cards in the rack I was plundering for text whether she gives out a lot of Valentines. One card was for that special person, she said, but she gets carried away by giving out a lot to her friends. Her sweet smile melted my heart. I wondered if that special person would take the same care finding just the right card for her.

One of the cards suggested that he wouldn't. It shows a guy asking a video store clerk for a movie on Valentine's Day: "Got any movies full of car chases, explosions and kung fu? Oh yeah, and a kissing scene?"

The naked truth

Actually, I discovered quite a few humorous Valentines. One has a rough-looking character thinking up phrases he can use for Valentine's Day: "Love stinks!" Yeah, that's a good one. And how about, 'Not in this lifetime!' Heh, heh...." Underneath it, the caption: "A candy heart engraver has an attitude problem."

Or take the one with a sandaled philosopher in the desert, holding a tulip. "What is the true nature of love?" he asks. "The true nature of passion? The true nature of romance?" Inside the card lies the answer: "These questions are best pondered naked. Happy Valentine's Day!"

Several more cards make not so subtle references to the fact that Valentine's Day is best observed in the buff. I especially liked the one in which a man named Bert "bought Sally the ultimate in sleepwear." Sally is seen opening the gift box and exclaiming: "There's nothing in here." Bert is seen with eyes dreamily lifted to heaven and a smirk on his face.

For the single woman frustrated with dating

duds there is the ultimate card of recognition. A young lady holds a box of chocolates she just received: "I wish men were like boxes of Valentine's Day candy — equipped with a little chart that tells us what's inside so we don't waste our time picking ones we don't want."

It's a mixed bag

Some cards are too syrupy. Take this one: "Always be my Valentine. I need you. I need your arms around me at the end of the day. I need your kindness, your caring, your gentle touch, your smile, your sense of humor," etc., etc. Apart from the fact that the writer does not have a literary bone in his body, he misses the point entirely of true love. This card's love is based on need — the worst kind there is.

Now here's an earnest one that takes the fun out of romance: "I'm really searching for clearer ways to express my feelings for you, warmer ways to just be with you, different ways to let you know I care about us." I hate this one: "Really searching ... to just be with you." It sounds like the prayer of a brainless toad: "I just want to thank you, Lord." And what's with this "I care about us very much"? Is "us" the object of this person's affection?

I would rather buy the corny card with the cut-out cow and udder that swings when you pump the tail. It says: "Sweetheart, there's no udder Valentine quite like you."

Some neat cards

At the end of this editorial I will tell what card I liked best of all, but first of all I'll mention the funniest card I saw.

Actually, Alice decided to send it to one of our boys. It's not something I would do myself, you understand. I don't believe in sending Valentine's Day cards to any one but Alice, and I don't always observe that custom either. Once in a while I buy her flowers for Valentine's Day but I prefer to do it on non-occasion days just to buck the commercial trend. Once before Alice sent cards to our sons. One son responded: "Hey, that was neat, Mom!" Another called and said, "What was that all about?"

So the one who said, "Neat" is getting the funny card from her. It shows a Spanish-looking guy waxing poetic to a girl in moonlight: "And your eyes, they're all brown and stuff, like an apple that's been cut open and left out too long." Underneath is the caption: "Ron Juan, Don's lesser-known brother." I know our son will get a kick out of that one. Actually, so would his brother.

And now for the winner — the card that best expresses my sentiments. It shows a photo of a cat rubbing its head against the chin of a large dog. Inside, the card reads: "The best relationships can't be explained."

Can I hear an "Amen" to that?

BW

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Letters

Why Ross's execution was delayed

After reading your editorial and an article by death-row inmate Michael Ross in the Jan. 9 issue of *Christian Courier*, we felt compelled to tell you our story, which began when you published an article by Michael Ross in 1996. At the end of that article, Ross asked people to show support and friendship to someone on death row. He gave the name and address of a U.S. organization that co-ordinates victim-offender reconciliation.

Janny and I talked and prayed about it. The Lord moved us to write to this organization and, in God's providence, they supplied us with the name, number and penitentiary location of an inmate we shall call Jeff (not his real name).

We promptly sent a letter to Jeff in the Holman prison in Atmore, Alabama. We introduced ourselves by telling him who we were, what we stood for, what motivated us, what our family structure was like and we offered him our friendship. We did not ask him any questions, such as: What is your skin color? What are the details of your crime? We knew that Jeff, by being on death row, must have committed a capital crime.

An important visit

We wrote Jeff on a regular basis and informed him that by Jan. 1997 we would winter in Panama City Beach, Florida. Jeff asked if, since Atmore is within five hours driving from Panama City, would we be willing to visit him if he could get permission. Then he advised us that his

estranged daughter, Mary, lived somewhere in the Panama City area.

With the Lord's help and some assistance from the local police department we were able to locate Mary. We found her living in the worst part of town in questionable circumstances. But when we knocked on the door of the trailer she lived in, we found out that Jeff and his family are white. We had several visits with Mary during which we told her of her dad's wish to hear from her.

When we got approval to visit Jeff on death row, we also applied for permission to have Mary visit him in the event that she would consent to come along. The Lord answered our prayers, and on Valentine's Day in 1997, we set out, after picking up Mary at her trailer.

In the bear-pit

We arrived at the gate of the Holman prison at 11 a.m. Being used to body searches from our visits to the Kingston Penitentiary, the thorough search in this facility did not faze us. We only found it time consuming, taking away from the time we could have spent with Jeff.

You should have seen the expressions of happiness when father and daughter met. We were fortunate that we could have an "open visit" instead of having to stay behind glass or behind a grate. We sat in a bear-pit — a room with several tables and small seats welded together and surrounded by grates. Armed guards were constantly watching us.

IRM outcome no threat to Calvin

In CC, Jan. 30, Peter Borgdorff responded to 18 questions regarding the investments in IRM by Christian Reformed Church agencies. In the response to Question 6 (How much money is invested?) I fear that a clear picture of Calvin College's situation may not have been drawn. Since Calvin College has a significant number of Canadian students and supporters, I want to be sure that your readers know exactly where Calvin stands.

Calvin's present investment with IRM is \$2.4 million. That is down from a peak of \$3.6 million. As noted in your article, Calvin's total long-term investments are about \$55 million, so the IRM monies are less than five per cent of the total long-term portfolio.

Not a disaster

What this means is that were Calvin to lose its entire investment with IRM — obviously a worst-case scenario — the rate of return on Calvin's long-term investments for this year would drop from about 21 per cent to about 16 per cent. In other words, a very good year would lose some of its luster. As Calvin president Gaylen Byker said in an e-mail message to the Calvin community: "We would not be happy, to say the least, about such a development. But neither would such a

This Holman prison holds approximately 750 men of which 150 are on death row. They are all in solitaire for 23 hours a day, with one hour of yard exercise if the weather is dry.

We had a good visit and answered plenty of questions about our faith, family and past. After a while Jeff dared to ask us: "Why are you befriending me? What are you trying to get out of this?" Our only reply could be: "We want to do the Lord's will and go where he leads." We spent over two hours with Jeff and his daughter.

At 1:45 we asked Jeff if we could pray with him. He consented and asked if we could pray for his daughter and his two other children. Then we left Mary and Jeff so they could be alone for 10 minutes.

Back in Panama City we were able to find work and a ride to work for Mary and got the local church we attend to become involved in her life.

This past Jan. 9 we were allowed another visit with Jeff. All is not well between Mary and Jeff so this time she did not want to come along. A lot of anger and unresolved family stuff is coming out. We have to tread carefully and lovingly. Our next visit is Feb. 9.

We know why God delayed final judgment and execution for Michael Ross. God gave Michael the courage to write, and his story moved us to respond. We feel extremely privileged that God has found us worthy to be used in this way.

Janny and Tom de Vries
Panama City Beach, Fla.

Suffering part of the obedient life

I have difficulty with the opinion piece by Gerald Oosterveen (CC, Jan. 23), "Leave Robert Latimer Alone." The last word hasn't been spoken on the subject of mercy killing. But we might start with Scripture.

In John 9:1 the disciples ask: "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents that he was born blind?" Jesus answered: "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life."

Our suffering gives God an opportunity to display his work. In Job 2:10 we read: "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?"

Finally, Christ's atoning work started, right from birth, with suffering. We may not underestimate that.

As a holy, almighty God he suffered all through his earthly life because of the sins and unbelief he met, even from his own disciples. Read Matt 26:36-46. Jesus prayed, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will." If Christ's suffering had been cut short, we wouldn't be saved, and Satan would have had it all. Christ's suffering fulfilled the promise given by God to Adam and Eve and paid for our sins. He was obedient to the end in his suffering. Should we not also be obedient to the end in our suffering?

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Education

Death in the classroom

The day of JFK's assassination is etched forever in my memory; not so much because an American president was shot on Nov. 22, 1963, but because that was the day we buried Margaret Verboom.

She was a first grader at John Knox Memorial Christian in Fruitland, Ontario, who was fatally struck by a car as she ran across Highway 8 to be the "first" of her mates in the school.

The tragedy shocked the whole school and church community; most of the students attended the funeral service in the church next door. As a school community we sang "Man is Like a Tender Flower" at the grave, and as we returned to the school buses from the grave site, the driver exclaimed: "John Kennedy has just been shot!"

There were no grief counsellors available for schools in those days. I do not even recall whether the minister visited the principal, teachers and children in the weeks following the tragedy.

All I remember of the days immediately after the death was practising the song we were to sing. With no gym or large space to house the entire school community, singing practice meant that every classroom door was open as we sang in our rooms with the sound reverberating through the hall. To this day I cannot sing that song without grief constricting my throat and distorting the sounds.

Song, then silence

Death in the classroom is not a frequent occurrence, yet it seems as if increasing numbers of children and adults are being affected by it. One reads or hears of a child dying of cardiac arrest in a gym; a bus driver's sudden collapse in front of a school; a teacher relinquishing the fight with cancer; a parent killed by a drunken driver. Every instance floods someone's emotions with pain and loss in the struggle to go on, to live without, to accept.

Words cannot contain the wounds; actions cannot erase the pain. Sometimes it is best just to sing and sing and then be silent.

Lacking other resources and professionals, Margaret's death initially brought our school

Pedagogeries



Alyce Oosterhuis

community closer together.

Once teachers have cried together in a staff room, the experience lingers and binds collectively. And having seen the "strongest" staff members crumble enabled us to talk about and listen to the grief and fears of our students. But after the funeral, I have no recall of discussions or grieving moments in the school.

Go through it together

Thinking back to that time, I am struck by the fact that JFK's assassination at the moment of Margaret's funeral, robbed us of the opportunity to complete our grieving process (just as it overshadowed the deaths on that same day of C.S. Lewis and novelist Aldous Huxley). The shock to the world replaced the impact of the grief to a school community.

Our conversations, bulletin boards, and social studies lessons were now filled with JFK mementoes et al.

The empty desk in Margaret's Grade 1 classroom was no longer a focal point: the JFK funeral cortege captivated everyone's attention. And with the Lee Harvey Oswald shooting shortly thereafter, the public's and our community attention continued to be directed elsewhere. I wonder how Margaret's family experienced these moments of public grief and shock.

It has been almost 35 years since our community's aborted grief process. Upon reflection, I can only advise all those who may be in grieving classrooms, schools and communities to work through their grief before becoming immersed in too many other calamities.

The pain of loss continues but, if we allow ourselves the time to cry, scream, listen, pray and hold on to each other, the pain becomes less searing.

Alyce Horzelenberg Oosterhuis teaches education and psychology at The King's University College in Edmonton.

B.C. government holds up funds for Sikh school

CC Staff

SURREY, B.C. — The B.C. government is temporarily holding back financial support for the Khalsa School in Surrey in the wake of a strong indictment of numerous financial and administrative problems, reports the *Globe and Mail*.

The private Sikh school's administration and financial management are riddled with problems, concluded a high-profile Education Ministry inspection team in its report released Jan. 30, after an extensive review of the school's operations and facilities.

The inspection team was appointed after reports that a Sikh extremist and airplane hijacker, who had spent 14 years in an Indian jail, had entered Canada with a false passport and was living in the school basement.

The six-year-old school also includes a Sikh temple, a basement apartment and a radio station that broadcasts by satellite around the clock. The private school receives about \$2.2 million per year in government support, and has 840 students from kindergarten to Grade 10.

RCMP raid

An RCMP commercial crime squad raided the school in January in connection with al-

legations of misappropriation of funds. The government inspection team raised the following issues of concern about the school:

- several teachers, who are paid about half of what they would make in the public school system, go on unemployment insurance over the summer months;
- as a result of low teacher salaries and significant donations that parents are required to make, the charitable society that runs the school has accumulated a surplus of more than \$6 million;

- audited reports were not available from the school;
- the school is violating the municipal zoning law by allowing people to live in its basement.

The inspection team also confirmed stories that administrators and school trustees failed to follow policies on allegations of sexual abuse.

In response to the report, the Education Ministry has decided to delay a payment of \$877,323 to the school until it is in full compliance with the province's legislation for independent schools. The ministry set Feb. 13 as the deadline for the school to make the necessary changes.

Redeemer gets international flavor with ESL program

ANCASTER, Ont. — Dr. M. Elaine Botha, academic vice-president of Redeemer College has announced the introduction of an "English as a Second Language" program at Redeemer.

In conjunction with Logos International staff, international students with university level qualifications are participating in the specially designed pro-

gram that will help them upgrade their English and prepare them for further studies at English language universities.

Redeemer welcomed the Logos staff and students from Korea and Indonesia on Jan. 26 as the new 12-week program began. They join students from 10 other foreign countries who already study at the college.

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to page 19

Film review

20-something actors/writers lend insight to painful redemption story

Marian Van Til

Good Will Hunting

Rated AA. Stars Matt Damon, Ben Affleck, Stellan Skarsgård, Robin Williams, Minnie Driver. Written by Matt Damon and Ben Affleck. Directed by Gus Van Sant.

Will Hunting has never been a good boy. And he's not even looking for goodwill. That is, not until he begins to get some inkling of the truth that "No man is an island, entire of itself," as Donne puts it.

That inkling doesn't come on its own, of course, and in fact, Will (Matt Damon) is not keen to make the discovery, with or without help. Now almost 21, he was a horribly abused orphan from South Boston, the tough, working-class part of town.

'I'm fine'

Will thinks he's doing just fine now, thank you: the trick is to be in control of your own life and not let anybody else get near enough to matter; or worse, to seize control so you have to do their bidding (again).

So Will hangs on, and hangs out at the local bar with three foul-mouthed, testosterone-charged friends when he's not pushing a broom or mop in the halls at MIT across town, or working construction to

demolish old buildings.—

Will is no different than they, he convinces himself, though even his friends know better. It's his amazing intellect that sets him apart. He reads; and reads; and understands what he reads. Not the daily paper, but literature, philosophy, American history, art history, the history of mathematics; you name it. And when Will is pushing his broom at MIT (which is perhaps the most prestigious technical institute in the world) he adeptly solves a math problem a professor posts on a hallway chalkboard to keep the post-graduate students challenged for the semester. Math, it turns out, is this "Southeast" boy's special genius — and "genius" is the word.

Deal of a lifetime

When Will and his buddies get busted for beating up some guys they don't like the look of, Will's rap sheet for assault, theft and various other offenses is impressive. And his knowledge of the law and his rights has been equally impressive, enough to



Matt Damon (l.) and Robin Williams in *Good Will Hunting*.

get him released on all previous occasions. But this time, the judge isn't buying it.

By now, the distinguished MIT professor knows who solved his "unsolvable" problem. After his astonishment subsides and he seeks Will out, he agrees to tutor the young man as a condition of parole. The judge agrees only if Hunting will also undergo counselling.

Five counsellors later, Will is getting a last chance in the of-

fice of psychologist Sean McGuire (Robin Williams in an effective dramatic role), who was the prof's college roommate and sometime friend. McGuire himself was a Southeast. That, combined with his innate skill, gradually allows him to see the good Will Hunting.

Believable film

The story ends in an upbeat manner, but as one might guess, it's not a good-time first-date-

and-popcorn movie. It's not always pretty to watch — and especially, to listen to (if the "f"-word offends you, even in dramatic situations where it's mostly justifiable, don't see this film). But, with only minor lapses, *Good Will Hunting* is believable, and because of that, ultimately moving.

That's not faint praise: the premise — self-taught boy genius from the wrong side of the tracks discovers self-awareness and (implied) fame and fortune — is not exactly original. But the way in which Harvard writing student Matt Damon and his actor friend Ben Affleck tell the story is.

A risk

What's most interesting about this film is that Damon and Affleck are themselves in their early 20s. They are obviously mature young men who have good insight into human nature — a lot more insight than many Hollywood screenwriters two and three times their age seem to have, or are willing to gamble on. Perhaps it's that combination of youthful insight and risk-taking that makes this film both believable and watchable as a kind of secular but very human redemption story.

Researchers study perfect pitch, are looking for more subjects

Marian Van Til

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. — Researchers at the University of California San Francisco are studying the musical phenomenon known as "perfect pitch" as part of an investigation which will help them better understand "the interplay of nature and nurture in the development of a particular behavior," says the Internet website the scientists have set up in order to attract additional study subjects and to report on their findings.

Perfect pitch is the ability to recognize pitches (musical tones) accurately and instantaneously without needing to use an external reference pitch.

The researchers are primarily interested in determining whether perfect pitch runs in families, what role musical studies play in developing this "gift," and how prevalent it is among musicians.

After conducting a large survey, in subjects studied so far, the researchers have found that only about 15 per cent of trained musicians have perfect pitch; that musical training seems to be necessary to develop it; that those individuals who do have it began their musical training before age six; but that such early music training does not mean one will have perfect pitch (some 70 per cent of musicians who began their training before age six do not); and that "perfect pitch is aggregated in families, ... supporting a role for genetic components in [its] development."

'Perfect pitch' gene

For the genetic study, individuals who fulfill the researchers stringent definition of perfect pitch, determined via audio testing, give a blood

sample, as does one family member without perfect pitch.

DNA is then prepared from approximately two teaspoons of each person's blood and is used in subsequent steps "to determine linkage between specific genetic markers and perfect pitch. Approximately 100 families are necessary for this phase of the study, but researchers need additional "perfect pitch families" to be genetically tested so the scientists can "hone in on a particular perfect pitch gene," they say.

"Many families with at least one perfect pitch possessor have already participated, but many more such families are needed to complete the first phase of the study," say the UCSF researchers. While they are interested in anyone with perfect pitch, they are particularly looking for subjects of Ashkenazi

Jewish ancestry, both because of the relative genetic homogeneity of that group (who lived for several centuries in Central and Eastern Europe), and because of the long tradition of musicianship among Ashkenazi Jews.

If you're interested...

If you or someone you know has (or thinks they have) perfect pitch and are interested in participating in the study, visit the website of the UCSF Neurogenetics Laboratory at www.perfectpitch.org. You can fill out a survey which will link you with a page of instructions on how to take the auditory tests for perfect pitch. If you'd like, you'll be informed of your score so you can compare it to the score of the group of perfect pitch possessors used as the standard.

If you've indicated a willing-

ness to participate (it doesn't matter where you live), you'll be contacted by e-mail or phone so that researchers can conduct a brief interview and arrange for a blood sample to be sent to them.

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Church

Men Alive in Christ: alive and well

Alan Doerksen

BARRIE, Ont. — Although people tend to think of Promise Keepers when they think of Christian men's groups, Men Alive in Christ has been running in Canada for nearly a decade longer than the U.S.-based organization.

Men Alive was started in 1981, nine years before Promise Keepers was started by Colorado University football coach Bill McCartney. Ted Maxwell began Men Alive after several men expressed to him their need for Christian direction to deal with the challenges and struggles in their daily lives specific to men.

"I was responding to a felt need," says Maxwell.

Men Alive actually grew out of the Women Alive organization. Maxwells wife, Nell, founded that group in 1973 and continues to be its president. "Out of that grew couples' conferences," says Ted Maxwell. These are held yearly in the Toronto area, usually in fall. Women Alive is the "driving force" behind the couples' conferences, says Maxwell, who has been married to Nell for 40



The Men Alive logo

years.

Men Alive focuses on presenting conferences with speakers who can address the concerns of men from a Christian perspective. These conferences typically take place on weekends and feature inspirational talks, singing and fellowship. Men Alive also offers leadership training and audiovisual resources.

Encourage, equip and evangelize

"Our mandate is to encourage, equip and evangelize men," says Maxwell. At conferences, "there's always an opportunity for guys to commit their lives to Christ." He adds, "A lot of guys use [the conferences] as their

spiritual inoculation for the year."

Unlike Promise Keepers conferences, which feature several speakers and musicians, Men Alive conferences each have one keynote speaker addressing several topics. Maxwell is not comfortable making comparisons between his group and Promise Keepers.

Men Alive is especially active in Toronto, where conferences are held each year. Recently, conferences and men's breakfasts have also been held in Hamilton, Chatham and Brockville, Ont.

In Alberta and B.C., Promise Keepers is very active, so Men Alive has chosen not to go "toe-to-toe" in those provinces, explains Maxwell. But he adds, "We will go wherever we're invited."

Men Alive has attracted interest from many denominations. But for the time being, it will not be starting local men's groups but will focus on conferences because of financial limitations, says Maxwell.

Keith Groen, a Christian school teacher in Chatham, Ont., is an enthusiastic supporter of



COURTESY MEN ALIVE
Men Alive President Ted Maxwell

Men Alive. "I've been blessed by the conferences," he says. "You get re-energized."

Likes low-key style

Groen went to the first Chatham Men Alive conference four years ago and has been involved since then with organizing the local conferences. The next one takes place Feb. 27 and 28.

Groen especially appreciates getting to meet strong Christians from other denominations at the meetings. "It's expanded my horizons" in this way, he says. Groen attends Chatham's Grace Christian Reformed Church and has been actively promoting Men Alive to other CRCs.

Men Alive has also encouraged Groen to be "much more open in speaking out" about his faith, and he has become "more of a praying person."

Compared to Promise Keepers, Men Alive is "a lot more low-key," says Groen. "We have smaller conferences."

He thinks Promise Keepers, which often holds meetings in sports arenas, tends to appeal more to sports-minded men. "I went to one organizational meeting of Promise Keepers and it was like a football game," he asserts.

Men Alive is "much more my style. There's not this 'hip-hip-hooray' stuff," says Groen. "Promise Keepers is good for some people but not for others."

Team player approach

Unlike Promise Keepers, Men Alive does not ask men to make promises but focuses on making a commitment to God, says Groen. Instead of emphasizing a strong leadership role in the family, as Promise Keepers does, Men Alive encourages men to be team players in the family.

The next Toronto conference for Men Alive will take place Feb. 20 and 21, and will feature guest speaker Dr. Gene Getz, director of the Center for Church Renewal in Dallas, Texas. He will speak on "Becoming Faithful Men: Living with Integrity in the Home, the Church and the World," and "Encouraging One Another: Reaching Up, Reaching In and Reaching Out." Getz has spoken at other Men Alive conferences and asserts: "This is a dynamic ministry that does not only involve planning but prayer."

Danny Daniels, minister of music for The Peoples Church in Toronto, will also be featured at the February conference. He recently co-wrote with Bill and Gloria Gaither the Grammy Award winning song *I've Just Seen Jesus*.

Laotian government detains religious meeting participants

VIENTIANE, Laos (EP) — Five foreigners, including three Americans, were released by the Laotian government on Feb. 3 after being detained for allegedly slandering the country during a religious meeting, the Laotian government reported on Feb. 4. The five were given one week to leave the country.

Unclear from the government's statement was whether the 39 Laotian participants in the meeting had also been released.

According to the government-run Laotian news agency KPL, the group held a religious meeting on Jan. 30 at a private home in Vientiane, the capital city of

Laos. KPL reported, "However, the real intent was not religious practice. The participants were reported to have wrongly slandered the Lao government, [and to have attempted] to interfere in the internal affairs of Laos." KPL also reported that participants in the meeting disparaged religions other than Christianity.

Continued restrictions

According to the U.S. State Department, the national constitution of Laos guarantees religious freedom, but "in practice, the government continues to restrict freedom of religion, especially for some Christian denominations."

The Americans involved, Jerry and Meg Canfield of Arkansas and Kenneth Fox of Arizona, serve with Partners in Progress, an Arkansas-based evangelical relief and development ministry affiliated with the Churches of Christ. Partners in Progress has worked in Laos since 1993.

Pope and Yeltsin will discuss visas, not religion law

Lawrence A. Uzzell

ROME — Though not at the top of the agenda, the growing visa problems now being experienced by Roman Catholic priests in Russia are likely to be one of the subjects discussed when Pope John Paul receives President Yeltsin, a well-informed Catholic source told Keston News Service at the end of January.

Though that issue is indirectly related to Russia's new law on church-state relations, the source said that the law itself is not on the agenda.

The great majority of Catholic priests in Russia are foreign nationals, and the country's visa authorities are increasingly allowing them visas for only three-month periods — and requiring them to return all the way to their home countries for each application to renew their visas.

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Church

U.S. will name new official to promote religious freedom

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP) — U.S. State Department will hire a new co-ordinator to promote religious freedom around the world, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright announced Jan. 23.

"I will designate a new senior-level coordinator within the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, to ensure that our efforts to advance religious freedom are integrated successfully into our broader foreign policy," said Albright, who added that the new co-ordinator would work with other government agencies and with religious leaders.

An integral component

"I consider the promotion of religious freedom to be an integral component of U.S. foreign policy, to be pursued not in isolation, but as part of our efforts to increase the respect of human rights around the world," Albright added.

Albright's announcement came with the release of a new report from the Advisory Committee on Religious Freedom Abroad, established in 1996 to recommend policy relating to the promotion of religious liberty.

The 35-page report urged President Clinton to deliver a "major address explaining the importance of religious freedom at home and abroad." It also encouraged the President to give "greater weight and enhanced importance" to matters of religious freedom in setting U.S. foreign policy, particularly in such areas as foreign aid and military assistance.

The report noted nations around the world where religious persecution is commonplace. "In Vietnam, Buddhists and Christians who act

independently of the officially approved temple and church are subject to arrest and harassment," the report said.

In Communist nations, such as China, members of government-registered religious groups have limited freedom, but others, including Tibetan Buddhists, Muslim Uygurs, unregistered Protestants and Catholics face "widespread harassment, detentions, incarceration, and persecution."

The report added, "The government of North Korea strongly discourages religious activities, unless it serves its purpose. There is a government-sponsored church that is reported to be open only when foreign visitors seek to visit."

The report also singled out Iran for its severe persecution of the Baha'i faith, but noted that Christians, Jews, and others face detention, torture and death in Iran. "The climate of intimidation in Iran has also severely and comparably affected certain Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian communities, whose members have been victims of harassment, persecution and extra-judicial killing," the report noted.

Still many limits

Russia's controversial law limiting religious freedom was noted in the report, which said, "Since its adoption, there have been increasing reports of efforts by local officials to restrict activities of religious minorities." The law was passed at the urging of the Communist-backed Russian Orthodox Church, and imposes sanctions on non-Orthodox faiths.

Albright said she will be working to advance religious freedom through U.S. foreign policy.

Graham not one of the 'most influential' 100?

NEW YORK, N.Y. (EP) — Time magazine will publish a series of special issues beginning in March to commemorate the 100 most influential people of the 20th century.

The proposed list includes John Kennedy, Franklin Roosevelt, Nelson Mandela, Golda Meir, Adolf Hitler, Winston

Churchill, Bill Gates, the Beatles, and many others, but does not include Billy Graham.

An Internet write-in campaign has been launched by admirers of Graham, who are urging Christians to visit Time's website (www.pathfinder.com/time/time100poll.html) to vote for the evangelist.

Tearing off their hoofs? — Calling all sheep experts

For I am going to raise up a shepherd over the land who will not care for the lost, or seek the young, or heal the injured, or feed the healthy, but will eat the meat of the choice sheep, tearing off their hoofs. (Zech 11:16, NIV)

Chapter 11 of the book of Zechariah has been called the most difficult chapter in the Old Testament. In it, the prophet is commanded to play the role of a shepherd over God's flock, holding two symbolic staffs in his hand, named "Favor" and "Union."

But the shepherd and the flock have a falling out, with the result that the shepherd-prophet decides to abandon the flock to its fate. He breaks the two staffs and receives 30 shekels of silver as "severance" pay. After this, the Lord asks him once again to play the role of a shepherd, this time to symbolize the foolish and harsh shepherd who is described in the verse quoted above.

A puzzling passage

The passage is full of puzzles. Who are the mysterious three shepherds? Why does the New Testament relate the 30 shekels to the money received by Judas for betraying Jesus (see Matt 27:9)? What is "the covenant I had made with all the nations," which is said to be revoked by the breaking of the staff named Favor (verse 10)?

Of course, before trying to find answers to these problems, it is necessary to understand the plain meaning of the words and phrases used in the original text. As someone who is engaged in writing a commentary on the book of Zechariah, I make it my first priority to try to understand the literal meaning of the Hebrew, but I often run stuck.

For example, the last words of the quoted verse speaks of "tearing off their hoofs" in the NIV, but this translation is far from certain. Does it really make sense to speak of a shepherd who is so rapacious that he would tear off the hoofs of his own sheep? The context seems to suggest that the shepherd is

Chapter & Verse



Wayne Brouwer
Andrew Kuyvenhoven
Laura Smit
● Al Wolters

eating the sheep that he was hired to tend, but the hoofs of sheep are hardly something edible, as far as I know.

Translator appeals for help

Here I need the help of people who know more about sheep and shepherds than I do. I wonder if there is anyone among my readers who knows whether there is any situation in which a shepherd might tear off a sheep's hoofs — or whether it is even possible to tear off the hoof without removing the entire foot.

The whole idea seems implausible to me. If it really is implausible, then I have good reason to look for some other meaning for the Hebrew words in this text. If anyone with a knowledge of sheep and shepherds can help me out, I would appreciate a word from him or her.

Fortunately, the overall meaning of the passage does not depend on the uncertainty of this one phrase. It is clear to anyone who reads the verse that the foolish shepherd is someone who does just the opposite of what a good shepherd does: he neglects and abuses his sheep for his own profit. The prophet is told to play this role as an announcement to God's people that the Lord will deliver them into the hands of an unscrupulous ruler or government — presumably as a punishment for their sins. And as always in the Scriptures, the threat of punishment is accompanied by the spoken or unspoken condition: "Unless you repent!"

Even the most difficult passages of Scripture are usually clear about the covenantal bottom line: "Obedience brings blessing, disobedience brings curse."

Al Wolters teaches Bible and Greek at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont. He invites sheep experts to drop him a line. He can also be contacted by phone at (905) 389-3032 (home) or (905) 648-2131 (office). His e-mail address is: awolters@redeemer.on.ca.

Orthodox Jews finally recognize Reformers, Conservatives

JERUSALEM, Israel (EP) — Defusing a controversy that strained its relations with Jews around the world, Israel's most powerful religious organization agreed on Jan. 25 to permit the state to recognize Reform and Conservative converts as Jews.

The agreement, which must be ratified by Israel's parliament, the Knesset, is a rare moment of agreement among the three streams of Judaism in

Israel, and is one of the few times Israel's Orthodox leadership has acknowledged the more liberal Reform and Conservative branches of Judaism.

A statement released jointly by leaders of the three movements said, "We believe that this arrangement will provide us a prolonged respite from the difficult struggles fought at the Knesset and in the courts, which have threatened to create a rift

within the Jewish people in Israel and in the Diaspora."

Send your Peter and Marja questions to Bert Witvoet at the CC office. Confidentiality is assured.

Feature

An unexpected Valentine



Berta Hosmar

One of my dresser drawers holds a curious collection of insignificant objects. All the items were given to me by street people — people who visited the Christian drop-in centre where I was a volunteer.

Among the objects is a trinket I'm really attached to. It's a Valentine, handmade of this cardboard, cut in the shape of a heart and decorated with many delicate drawings of carnations and roses. A lace border was glued around the edge, and printed neatly on the card are the words: "To Berta, with love from Grace."

The reason I treasure this card so much is because I feel I didn't deserve it at the time Grace presented it to me. I'd never given her any extra love or attention, simply because she wouldn't let me.

I haven't seen Grace for many years now, and I don't believe she still lives in this area. She might not even be alive anymore.

Not attractive

I asked Grace once where she lived. Big mistake. "Here, there and everywhere," she snarled.

It seemed to me that Grace was always in a bad mood when she came for brief visits to the centre. I volunteered one day a week, and I hardly ever saw her smile. But maybe I didn't know how to approach her. George, the coordinator, could get her to giggle occasionally.

Grace was not attractive. She was at least 75 pounds overweight and her sweatshirts were too small for her. Her bare stomach invariably bulged from her sweatpants. Her hair was greasy, and even in cold weather she rarely wore socks, although George had offered them to her many times.

Yet there was something about her that made you wonder why she had become a street person. It was hard to tell her age. She could have been in her 40s or 50s, but she could also have been much younger. She had no fixed address as far as we knew, and one summer day I saw her sleeping on a park bench, head resting on a shopping bag.

Yet when she wanted to exchange a few words with me, which was very seldom, she used perfect grammar. And I never heard her utter profanities. What struck me most was

her eye for beauty. Occasionally she would provide the centre with artistic flower arrangements.

She'd come in, scowling as usual, and would thrust a small bouquet at the person nearest to her, sit down, have a cup of tea and then disappear again.

Wrong question

In the summer she would use wildflowers, some twigs and grasses, a ribbon and an old jam jar, with surprising results. During the winter months the floral tributes did not stop coming. She'd use carnations, roses, mums and some wintergreens.

The first time I saw one of her winter arrangements, I exclaimed, "Oh, Grace, how lovely! Where did you get those gorgeous flowers?"

Wrong question. She retorted angrily: "Mind your own business." Properly chastized I tried to make up by offering her a cup of tea, just the way she liked it: lots of sugar and milk. She accepted it grudgingly.

Steven, a regular visitor and ex-convict, tried to make me feel better by whispering, "Don't mind Grace; she's so even-

tempered."

"Even-tempered?" I repeated, somewhat mystified.

He explained, laughing at his own joke: "Yes, even tempered, always mad! And by the way, she steals those flowers from funeral homes."

My relationship with Grace did not improve during the months that followed. I might not see her for many weeks, and I wondered uneasily if she were trying to avoid my weekly presence, for I noticed that her flower arrangements kept coming.

But occasionally she would show up when I was working, and we developed a routine. I'd leave her alone for a while, then bring her a cup of tea and pay her a compliment on her flower arrangements. She never responded, just gave me a withering look, sat for a while and often disappeared when George started the daily Bible study.

I wondered about her past. I had heard through the grapevine that her father had been a successful businessperson. What could have happened? How did Grace spend her days?

But with so many people coming and going it

was easy to concentrate on others. And then it was February 14. The atmosphere at the centre was rather festive. Several women and a few men were making Valentines. Paper, crayons, glue, scraps of fabric and scissors had been provided.

Then Grace walked in. Without greeting anyone she helped herself to some supplies and sat down at a small table in a corner. Then she went to work.

After a while I started my routine. I poured a cup of tea and walked over to her. I glanced at her handiwork, ready to compliment her, but she snatched a book from the table and covered her project while giving me another one of her disapproving looks.

I muttered an excuse and made myself scarce.

But then, some 20 minutes later, the impossible happened. Grace heaved her bulk out of her chair, put on her heavy man's jacket and walked over to me. She handed me her Valentine, and said two words: "For you."

Then she walked out, leaving me speechless.

Poetry

Winter poems

by Beatrice Vandervelde

The Other

A stumbling block.
Huddled in a pile
of rags and blankets
on a street grate,
he forces us to skirt around him
as we flock from Roy Thomson Hall,
heads bent against a biting wind,
homeward bound.

Our spirits soared to music in that hall,
the warm glow lasting in spite of the cold,
but his practised, "Have a good evening now"
ascending from that lowly perch, cuts to the bone.

Arctic temperatures,
blowing snow,
blood-chilling wind —
we wouldn't put a dog out in this weather.
Why is he here in this cold?

"Have a good evening now."
The voice pursues,
haunts —
the other begets a face.



Trust

Proudly he stands on the double bladed runners,
waves to someone behind the kitchen window
(a tiny hand wriggle, a scratch in the air),
moves one foot and crashes onto the ice,
almost hitting his face.

He winces: no tears.

Clambering up, he again looks to the house,
gives the mini wave, tries another step.
After every tumble, he hoists himself back
onto his feet,
sometimes quickly, sometimes taking his sweet time,
rubbing his face with his mitt.
Always there's the quick peek to the window,
but as he learns to balance, to glide,
those sideways glances come less often,
while Bruno, his back to the window,
barks from shore,
still afraid of the slippery sheet.

Recess Fun

they toil up the icy hill
at the edge of the playground
then whizz down
on knee patches
the seat of their pants
or their arched body
light carefree
laughing and screaming

at the bottom they scramble
to their feet lickety-split
clamber up the slippery slope
anxious to whoosh down again
the free exhilarating ride
well worth the price
of a bump
a split lip
even Mom's waiting frown

Winter Wash

*the shirts steam
as they're pegged
north wind plays
tug-of-war
whips them into shape
they billow as if stuffed
dance on a tight rope
pause
stiff and still
soldiers at attention*

Icicles

dangling from the cavestrough
they glitter brightly in the sun,
slowly thin as their silvery liquid
slithers down smooth curves,
tumbles like bright tears
into a sparkling corrugated row:
jewelled ridge in the snow below.

Snowy Deck

thick-glazed icing
shimmers on the deck
a radiator grid
of puffed up slabs:
risen, glistening dough

Feature

Even a talking horse beats quiet convictions

Jon Dykstra

Six months ago I officially became an expert on everything. Many people go to school for years just to become an expert on one small, particular thing so it's often assumed that becoming an expert on everything would be even harder and take even longer. Actually it takes but one simple step: become a journalist.

A journalist can be expected to write about as many as five separate subjects a day and to write about all of them knowledgeably. You might imagine that this incredible task requires the best and brightest that humankind has to offer. It may indeed, but unfortunately, the best

"The simple truth is, stupidity sells papers. If you say something stupid you can be sure the press will use it."

and brightest are already tied up trying to extrapolate the existence of the sixth dimension based on the cube root of pi's trillionth digit. So the task is left to whoever is stupid enough to work for a starting wage of \$15,000. They are the few and the desperate. Yes, these are your dedicated daily information providers.

As both a Christian and a newly anointed expert on everything I'm asked again and again, "Why is the news so biased against Christians?" The first time I was asked this question I immediately took steps to answer it as only a journalist could. Fred the hot-dog vendor was standing a scant three steps

away so I pulled out my very professional looking tape recorder, held it up to Fred and then asked him the same question. Fred gave his usual thoughtful response while I got my usual chili dog and paid him \$2.50 for both. I then returned to my still waiting inquisitor and repeated what Fred said with a quick "Sources say..." added in front of it.

Mundane reasons

I found out rather quickly that while this technique never fails to impress when found on the front page of the evening edition, it works rather less well in person. My inquisitor asked me the question again and, just to show she meant business, placed her clenched fists on either hip (her hips, not mine): "Why is the press so biased against Christians?"

Unable to avoid the question I bought her a coffee and we sat down to discuss it. She had her own theory about the press being left-wing, liberal and full of atheists who lived just to take shots at Christians. She flipped through the day's paper and pointed out a dozen stories that promoted gay-rights, euthanasia, or even the latest evolutionary "discovery." She also mentioned that Christian and pro-family groups like Alliance for Life, REAL Women and the Alberta Federation of Women United for Families often complain their quotes are purposely taken out of context.

While it's obvious the press has an agenda, it's usually not a left-wing, liberal, atheist one. I explained to her that the press's real agenda can be summed up in two parts: 1) to sell as many

papers as possible; and 2) to get home before lunch.

Familiar question

This startlingly un-ominous agenda didn't seem to please my questioner. She clenched her teeth and leaned across the table grabbing my tie to pull me close. My clip-on made this last action less intimidating than it might otherwise have been, but the overall effect still captivated my attention. "So why," she whispered hoarsely, "is the news full of so many anti-Christian stories?"

As her hot breath warmed my cockles an alarming sense of *deja vu* overwhelmed me. This had all happened before, but try as I might, I just couldn't think of when or where. Sure, an ordinary man might be able to remember the last time a woman he was drinking coffee with suddenly

reached over and ripped off his tie. As a journalist this has happened to me far too often (thus the clip-ons, both cheaper and safer), and after a while all the separate occurrences have blurred together.

Then it hit me. The situation had been quite different but the question had been exactly the same. And I had been the one asking it.

Early last spring I had taken a run at political office. As a Social Credit candidate I was only a small step up from the fringe candidates and so was desperate for publicity. When the daily

importance and stressed the issues. After a long and impassioned conversation with the reporter, the following quote appeared in the paper the next day:

"There are 2,000 people who would vote for Mr. Ed as long as he were pro-life. I could be a talking horse and they would vote for me if I were pro-life" — Jon Dykstra, Social Credit.

Not quite what I was hoping for; it was by far the stupidest thing I had said. As a politician I was convinced the reporter had selected this worst possible quote because he didn't like my Christian stances.

As a trained journalist I knew better.

The simple truth is, stupidity sells papers. It doesn't matter if you're Christian or not, if you say something stupid you can be sure the press will use it: the prime minister made headlines talking about his imaginary homeless friends; Parizeau did it by talking about "the ethnics"; and I took a more original approach with a talking horse. As one of my more compassionate friends told me later, "If stupidity sells papers, you must have doubled the circulation."

No access

My recollection complete, I turned to my companion to see if this trip down memory lane had done anything to answer her question. She was staring intently at the place where my tie had been. "Stupidity?" she asked, still staring, "Is that the whole answer?"

It was not.

I became a reporter to write about issues that aren't usually covered. I was determined to write about everything from AIDS to zebras with a distinctly Christian perspective, so I began the research for each new story with a few calls to pro-life, pro-family or Christian organizations. These organizations were quite wary of the press, and as my coffee companion had already noted, they do seem to have reason to be. But they were so scared they refused to answer my questions.

Of course they weren't quite as blunt as that. One place kept telling me the director was out and that she would phone me in an hour when she got in. I got the same message every hour as I regularly phoned back and finally had to give up as lunch approached.

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Jon Dykstra's recent campaign brochure.

paper called I did my best to take full advantage to the opportunity. I talked to that reporter for almost an hour explaining both my party's and my personal stances.

A stupid quote

But the reporter ignored my explanations and kept asking personal questions. I told him I wasn't important. I told him people wouldn't be voting for me as a person, but instead, would be voting for me as the only candidate who stood up for the important issues. Over and over I downplayed my own im-

Welcome to Fort Coldspot

Another organization told me that only one person was allowed to speak to the press and he was away for three weeks. A few groups did get back to me, but anywhere from two days to several weeks too late. In contrast, I managed to talk to two AIDS activists in the space of a single hour. They were very cooperative and very outspoken.

As an unbiased, objective and Christian reporter I absolutely refused to write all my stories with two AIDS activists as the only sources (they just didn't add anything to my gambling

"If Christians want better press coverage they need to start appealing to the lazy and sensationalistic nature of the press."

story) so I sucked in my gut and decided to work after lunch. I spent my afternoons alone in the cavernous office tracking down Christian sources and experimenting with the room's acoustics. But because I refused to go with just the most available sources, stories that should have taken half a day took more than a week.

Take initiative

So why is the newspaper and nightly news full of anti-Christian stories?

Because most reporters won't take that week.

If Christians want better press coverage they need to start working at it. They need to start appealing to the lazy and sensationalistic nature of the press.

Our most basic beliefs are pretty radical nowadays so we already have sensationalism covered, but we still need to work at appealing to the lazy nature of the press. And if they aren't calling us we better start calling them.

This isn't as intimidating as it may sound; calling a reporter doesn't mean you personally have to give him a quote. As a "regular" person they may not even be interested in talking to you.

Instead you can compile a list of Christian sources with impressive titles behind their names, people who have spent the time to become experts

about one small, particular thing. Then when you hear or read about an issue that should have a Christian voice speaking out on it, you can phone up the reporter and give him the appropriate phone number. Reporters don't like sounding biased, so if you can give them a ready source from the other side of an issue they're usually happy to have it.

We are reclusive

And if you're afraid you might say something stupid, trust in God and do your best.

After my idiotic Mr. Ed comment I received calls from dozens of curious voters, and the reporter found the comment interesting enough to follow it with six column inches about my campaign positions (more coverage than he gave any other Social Credit or New Democrat candidate).

After the good that came of this escapade, I pinned up a little sign in my room which read "GOD Can Overcome Even Your Stupidity." It kept me humble (no easy task), but more importantly, it freed me from worry.

My coffee companion wanted to blame the media's anti-Christian stance on some kind of hidden agenda. That's taking the easy way out, shifting the blame to an available scapegoat.

The news media may have more than its share of liberal, left-wing atheists, but they still aren't so much anti-Christian as lazy and sensationalistic. They take the path of least resistance and talk to the people who want to talk to them — like gay rights lobbyists, euthanasia advocates and other radicals desperate for publicity.

Our fault

They won't stir up controversies unless there are groups willing to take hard stands. And they don't have the time or patience to talk to people who will "get back to them." It's not the media's fault; it's ours. The news is full of anti-Christian content because Christians are boring, timid and reclusive.

And that's my expert opinion.

Jon Dykstra is a physical education student at the University of Alberta and has completed a journalism program at Grand MacEwan Community College in Edmonton.

George W.J. Laidlaw

"Oh no! Look at this mess!" my mother cries in frustration.

"What's wrong?" I ask.

"The old fridge has died again. I can't take it any longer. We just wasted a hundred dollars with the service man last week. Look, now all the food is ruined."

The kitchen floor is puddled in water. Our refrigerator must have died while we were away on the weekend.

My heart gives a leap of joy. Maybe my chance has come.

"Does that mean we're going to buy a new one?"

"Yes, and I'm going to tell your father right away. Then we're all going downtown and we're going to buy a reliable fridge once and for all."

The appliance salesman is really happy to see us.

"Now what can I do for you, little man?" he asks.

I hate being called "little man." I am seven years old. I ignore his question.

"Can you please show us a reliable, good quality refrigerator?" My dad asks.

"Why certainly. Fortunately, our annual sale is on. We have several specials. We also have some reconditioned ones that are customer priced."

My mother bristles at the offer of a reconditioned fridge. "No, we are looking for a new one. Can you show us the models? What are the differences between Inglis, Coldspot, Kenmore, Whirlpool and Maytag?"

My mother takes her time and makes the salesman describe and show the differences between each.

"Which has the best rating? What sort of warranty is available?" My father asks.

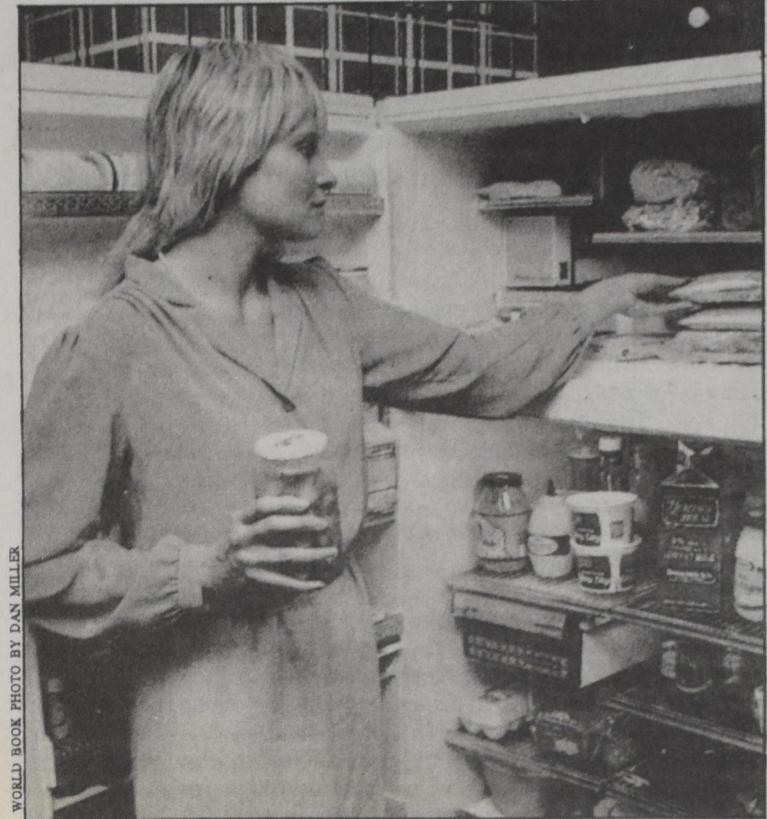
I don't care which one they buy as long as it's big. I don't want a mini fridge or a narrow fridge, just a big one.

"We'll take the 18 cubic foot Coldspot. Can you deliver it tomorrow?"

"Well, let me see," the salesman replied. "If you take the floor model, you can save \$20. It won't be boxed, but it can be delivered tomorrow."

"Oh no, Dad!" My heart freezes. "I want the box!"

My dad ignores me and starts to shake his head in agreement when my mother asks, "Is there a trade-in available for our old



"Mom and Dad take turns opening and examining our new fridge."

WORLD BOOK PHOTO BY DAN MILLER

great time."

"

Yes, there's a \$50 trade-in coupon, but that doesn't apply when you take one off the floor. We can recycle your old fridge, but there's a pick-up charge. If you take one from the warehouse, we will pick up your fridge for a 10-dollar charge and the trade-in coupon can be applied to the cost of the new one. Delivery is available only on Saturday.



It's coming on Saturday. Mom is getting rid of the old clunker and I am getting my dream.

My friends bike over just as the delivery van arrives. We watch them unload the fridge.

"Oh boy, it's a beauty!" David cries. "We're going to have a

fridge?"

The fridge is moved into the kitchen but we concentrate on the Coldspot box. We have magic markers and I have borrowed the carving knife. Bret brought over some red and brown paint, too.

Mom and Dad take turns opening and examining our new fridge. We get some orange juice and some cookies from the cupboard. It takes us all afternoon to carve doors and windows, and to do the painting, but it's worth it. In the centre of my back yard is the box, our new clubhouse. The big sign, painted in red, says: "Welcome to Fort Coldspot"!

George W.J. Laidlaw lives in Carp, Ont.

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Comment

Two weeks that were

Bert Hielema

A NUMBER OF MEN made the news these past two weeks: the Pope, Bill Gates and Bill Clinton, of which Clinton stood out hands down — or pants down. Just as Nixon made Watergate famous, different "gates" are being tried out in connection with Clinton: I have heard Zipergate, Fornigate and even Tailgate.

There is a story about these three now making the rounds. Bill Clinton, Bill Gates, the Pope and a hippie backpacker are in an aircraft that is spinning out of control. There are only three parachutes. Mr Clinton says, "I'm leader of the free world, so I'd better take one of these chutes." He does.

Bill Gates says, "I'm the smartest and the richest man in the world, so I'd better take one of these parachutes too." So he takes it and jumps out.

The Pope says to the hippie: "I'm an old man; you have your life ahead of you. Go ahead: you take the last parachute." Says the hippie: "No need, Papa. The smartest dude in the world just jumped out of the plane with my backpack."

TALKING ABOUT THE pope. I think it was in *Time* magazine where I read: "The Pope doesn't seem to care anymore what he looks like or how he walks or talks. 'Se crollo, crollo,' ('If I collapse, I collapse')" he told aides who recently suggested he skip a few of his normal appointments. He shrugs off suggestions of retirement with a joke: "To whom would I give my letter of retirement?"

I am glad he kept his appointment with George Vandervelde, as related in that beautiful article in this paper describing his dinner with the Pope. It moved me.

In connection with a reply to a report, I read the *Westminster Confession*, since it was often quoted. There I noticed that it describes the Roman Catholic Church as pagan and the Pope as the Anti-Christ. I am glad that George gave the Pope a more up-to-date confessional statement.

WHILE ON THE CHURCH: in December the *New York Times Magazine* devoted an en-

tire issue to religion. Its title: God Decentralized."

I love statistics, so here are some from that issue:

- the percentage of the American population that belongs to a church or synagogue: in 1776: 17%; in 1861: 37%; in 1900: 50%; in 1947: 76%; in 1997: 68%.
- 95% say they believe in God. The same percentage of Americans pray today (90%) as did in 1947, and also the same percentage still attend church once a week (41%), while 63% of the population regularly gives thanks before meals, compared to 43% in 1947.
- 93% of homes contain at least one, and 33% of adults say they read the Bible at least once a week.

I am a bit suspicious of all these statistics. They certainly are not true for Canada. If 38 per cent of Canadians go to weekly church services, as this article states, then Tweed must be a godless town: I can't vouch for the Roman Catholic Church, but the Protestant churches have an average combined attendance of no more than 250 people for all five churches, or perhaps eight per cent of the total population here.

Isn't that generally true for Canada. Also, Bible knowledge is pitiful:

- 54% can't name the authors of the four gospels;
- 63% don't know what a gospel is;
- 58% can't name five of the Ten Commandments;
- 10% think that Joan of Arc is Noah's wife."

IN PREPARING A report for the Presbyterian Church on "The Christian Gospel and the Market Economy," I went back to a book I have, *The American Religion*, by Harold Bloom. He says: "I argue in this book that the American Religion, which is so prevalent among us, masks itself as Protestant Christianity, yet has ceased to be Christian." I believe him. Fortunately he excludes Calvinism from this category (p. 232). So at least the readers of CC may rest assured.

THAT WE HAVE ALL sorts of "Christians" became even more plain to me when I read in the *Wall Street Journal*: "Christian nudists bare all for Jesus." The story recounts that in a one-room church somewhere in New Hampshire, the lay preacher,

Harry Westcott, steps out from behind the pulpit, naked except for white sneakers and a black watch. Not even a tie. The accompanist, his fingers skimming the keyboard of the Wurlitzer, is similarly undressed.

"Many Christians believe they will stand naked before God on Judgment Day. A small but fervent group doesn't want to wait," Mr. Westcott says. "Just because people get naked to have sex doesn't mean that they have to have sex when they're naked." He points to Isaiah 20:2: "At that time the Lord had spoken by Isaiah, the son of Amos, saying, 'Go and loose the sackcloth from your loins and take off your shoes from your feet.' And he had done so walking naked and barefoot."

But after October when temperatures fall, the church hangs up a sign that reads, "Clothed for the Winter." Just because Job says that: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return there," doesn't mean that in between we have to be naked as well.

TALKING ABOUT BIRTH, new parents apparently favor Michael as a name for baby boys and Sarah for baby girls. The five most popular names are: Sarah, Emily, Kaitlyn, Brianna and Ashley; and Michael, Matthew, Nicholas, Jacob and Christopher.

OPRAH HAS BEEN in the news. Her name reversed is "Harpo," (the name of her production company). Which sounds similar to harpy, which means vampire. This must have been the way cattlemen saw her when she bad-mouthed beef burgers, calling meat "dangerous food." She is so influential that after Oprah's show aired, cattle prices dropped \$18 per head and cattle farmers lost millions. So they are suing Ms. Winfrey for slander. Check the local papers for how this lawsuit will conclude.

TO THE ECONOMY: a more serious matter. A year ago the Pacific Rim was the place to be for economic growth. Now the area is called, quite correctly, the Pathetic Rim. People in that area have lost, so far this year, a trillion dollars in currency devaluations and the stock market.

Yet the North American markets act as if this is good for us.

Financial experts — if there are such animals — fear that the "Asian Contagion" will spread across the world, and are keeping their mouths shut for fear of creating a self-fulfilling prophecy. Some expect that there is more bad news to come.

So what is my advice for investment? Put it in bonds, either government or Triple A companies, such as banks. At least the six per cent you earn is guaranteed. Today you should be more concerned with return of capital than return on capital.

AS A MEMBER OF the World Watch Institute I received that group's annual report called "State of the World 1998" in the mail last week. Its main message is: If the world economy as it is now constructed continues to expand, it will eventually destroy its natural system and decline.

Here are some interesting figures that confirm this trend:

- between 1950 and 1997 the global economy expanded from an annual output of \$5 trillion to \$29 trillion (US), about a six-fold increase, while the world population in that time doubled.
- In the last seven years, 1990-1997, economic output has exceeded the total economic production of the last 10,000 years till 1950.
- Since 1950, use of wood has doubled, use of paper has increased six-fold, fish consumption has increased by a factor of five, water use has tripled and fossil fuel use increased 500 per cent.

WITH THE CHINESE New Year, January 28, we entered the year of the Tiger. I searched the Internet for an explanation and one source, an astrologer, tells me that such a year, which lasts till February 15 1999, is disruptive, feisty and impetuous.

Tiger years are characterized by dynamic activity, from universal upheaval to breakthrough discovery and political foment. Both 1914 and 1938 were Tiger years.

Well, the year certainly has started with a bang, economically, politically and weather-wise. El Nino is supposed to give us a cool, wet summer.

Bert Hielema is enjoying the leisurely pace of his retirement. He even plays Solitaire on his computer once in a while.



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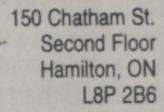
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Classified Rates	Anniversaries	Obituaries	Obituaries	Teachers
<p>(Revised February 1, 1995)</p> <p>Births \$25.00 Marriages & Engagements \$40.00 Anniversaries \$45.00 2-column anniversaries \$90.00 Obituaries \$45.00 Notes of thanks \$35.00 Birthdays \$40.00 All other one-column classified advertisements: \$15.00 per column inch. NOTE: Minimum fee is \$15.00. Letter under file number \$35.00 extra. Photos: \$25.00 additional charge.</p> <p>Note: All rates shown above are GST inclusive</p> <p>ATTENTION!</p> <p>a) <i>Christian Courier</i> reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format.</p> <p>b) A sheet with information about an obituary sent by funeral homes is not acceptable since it leads to errors and confusion.</p> <p>c) Photographs sent by fax are not acceptable. If you wish a photo included, send us the original.</p> <p>d) <i>Christian Courier</i> will not be responsible for any errors due to handwritten or phoned-in advertisements.</p> <p>e) The rate shown above for classifieds covers any length up to five column inches. <i>Christian Courier</i> reserves the right to charge for additional column inches at the rate of \$15.00 per column inch (GST incl.).</p> <p>NEWLYWEDS & NEW PARENTS We offer a one-year subscription for only \$25.00 (GST incl.) to the couples whose wedding is announced in the <i>Christian Courier</i> and to the parents of the child whose birth announcement appears in our paper. To facilitate matters, we encourage those who request the wedding or birth announcement to enclose \$25.00 and the couple's correct address.</p> <p>Christian Courier 4-261 Martindale Rd. St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1 Phone: (905) 682-8311 Fax: (905) 682-8313</p>	<p>1938 March 3 1998 "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another" (1 John 1:7). We thank God for the 60th anniversary of</p> <p>JOHN and PAULINE DEKOK Jack & Mary deKok — Kanata, Ont. David, Alan, Debra, Brian Herb & Jane deKok — Cambridge, Ont. John & Sandra, Steven & Kate, Michael & Lisa, Jennifer & Jeff Rene & Dorothy deKok — Ancaster, Ont. Angela, Ron & Joy, Kevin Johanna Matthews — London, Ont. Kelly, Kevin Herman & Mary VanderMunnik — Cambridge, Ont. Pauline, Jeremy, Anna, Thomas Open house will be held on Saturday, Feb. 28, 1998, from 2-4 p.m., at 1415 Upper Wellington St., Hamilton, Ont. Best wishes only, please. Address: 223-1415 Upper Wellington St., Hamilton, ON L9A 5E8</p> <p>Herwijnen Stratford the Neth. 50 years Ont. 1948 February 19 1998 With happiness and thanksgiving we announce the 50th anniversary of the wedding of</p> <p>HUBERT and WILLEMINA VAN DRUNEN (nee DE KOCK) Congratulations and love from your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Andrew & Catherine Van Drunen — Lacombe, Alta. Bonnie, Julie, Adrian, Cornelius and Sarah Catherine Henry & Lykke Van Drunen — Stratford, Ont. Kirsten, Erik, Jonathan, Carolyn Nell & Jim Gallagher — Orangeville, Ont. Kevin, Matthew, Luke, Thomas Adriana Van Drunen — Toronto, Ont. Harry Van Drunen & Laura Fitzsimmons — Toronto, Ont. Home address: 124 Charles St., Stratford, ON N5A 5X9</p>	<p>Werkendam Burnaby the Neth. B.C. On Tuesday, Jan. 27, 1998, CATHERINE J. (TIENKE) DE RUYTER was suddenly and tragically taken from us in a car accident at the age of 70. At the funeral, held on Saturday, Jan. 31, in the First CRC of Vancouver, we were comforted by Jesus' words of promise found in John 14:1-4. She is remembered lovingly by her husband, Jan Ima & John Hamhuis — Smithers, B.C. Herb & Joni de Ruyter — Chilliwack, B.C. Andy & Penny de Ruyter — Richmond, B.C. nine grandchildren, a brother, Piet Schmal of the Netherlands, and many other relatives and friends in the Netherlands and Canada.</p>	<p>Oldekerk Jarvis the Neth. Ont. June 28, 1936 - Feb. 1, 1998 "We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1). Peacefully, the Lord called unto Himself</p> <p>FRED HIELEMA Dear husband of Margaret (Haak). Loving father and grandfather to: Peter & Evelyn — Jarvis Leona, Rebecca, Jared, Michelle Jacob & Marilyn — Jarvis Jaylene, Brandon, Blair, Shawna, Devon, Austin John & Sue — Jarvis Cameron, Chad Ed & Kelly — Jarvis Emily, Grace Carolyn & Brian Bassindale — Selkirk Cody, Colin Linda & Rick (friend) Brother to: Jack and Dorothy, Ralph and Gertie, Susan and Cor Rauwerda, Nancy and Bob Lenos, Emma and Henry Winter, Harry and Kathy, Peter and Pat. Brother-in-law to: Andrew, Jake, Kees and Ann, Bob and Hilda, Pat and Ralph Scholten, John, Andy and Sonia, Gertie and Jack Oosterhuis, Diane Urbanski. Funeral service was held on Wednesday, Feb. 4, 1998, at the Ebenezer Chr. Ref. Church, in Jarvis, Ont., officiated by Jeff Janssen. Correspondence address: Margaret Hielema, 10 Elizabeth Street, Jarvis, ON N0A 1J0</p>	<p>BRESLAU, Ont.: Woodland Chr. High School invites applications for the following possible openings for the 1998-1999 school year: French/Geography and Physical Education/Science/Mathematics Please direct applications and inquiries to: Gary VanArragon, Principal Woodland Chr. High School R.R. #1, Breslau, ON N0B 1M0 Phone: (519) 648-2114 Fax: (519) 648-3402</p> <p>NEWMARKET, Ont.: Holland Marsh Distr. Chr. School has possible openings in all divisions. We especially need someone with strengths in computer and/or music in the intermediate grades. Come and teach in a well-established school just north of Toronto. Do you love children? The Lord? Want to teach Christianly? Please send your application to: Henry Lise, Principal HMDCS 18955 Dufferin St., R.R. #2 Newmarket, ON L3Y 4V9 Fax: (905) 775-2395</p> <p>LACOMBE, Alta.: Lacombe Chr. School, approx. 371 students in K-9, located in Central Alberta, invites applications from qualified teachers for a junior high social studies-language arts position (1 year maternity) and possible upper elementary positions. Applicants must qualify for Alberta teacher certification. Please send resume and letter of application to: Martin Folkerts Lacombe Chr. School 5206-58 Street Lacombe, AB T4L 1G9 Phone: (403) 782-6531 Fax: (403) 782-5760</p> <p>STRATFORD, Ont.: Stratford District Chr. School, invites teaching applications for maternity leave for Kindergarten at 50% from March 23 until June 19, 1998. We are also in need of a full-time teacher for Grades 5/6 from March 23 until June 19, 1998. Strength in French, music and computers would be an asset. Please send your resume by Friday, Feb. 13, 1998, for either of these short-term positions. We have a possible opening for a full-time Grade 5/6 teacher in September of 1998. Please send your resume for this position by March 6, 1998, to: Mr. Edward Petrusma, Principal Stratford Distr. Chr. School R.R. 1, 130 Huron Rd., Sebringville, ON N0K 1X0 Phone: (519) 393-5675 Fax: (519) 393-6306</p>
Job Opportunities	Miscellaneous	Real Estate		
<p>Full-time salesclerk for rural hardware and farm supply store. Must be energetic and self-motivated with good communication skills. Knowledge of residential and commercial plumbing and heating supplies an asset. Send resume to Wellandport Home Hardware, Box 100, 5157 Canborough Rd., Wellandport, ON L0R 2J0, Fax: (905) 386-6918.</p> <p>Help Wanted: Full-time help needed for meat processing plant, Cambridge, Ont., area. Call (519) 621-6829.</p>	<p>ONE TO ANOTHER Christian companion magazine. Hundreds of readers Canada-wide. Single issue \$5. Write to: #12 923 2nd Ave. S. Lethbridge, AB T1J 0C7</p> <p>Offering 7% on 3 year loan money for successful real estate partnership. (403) 449-6143</p>	<p>CLINTON, ONTARIO ADULT LIFE LEASE RESIDENCES available, 936 sq.ft. to 1235 sq.ft. Fully wheelchair accessible, sprinkler system, central air, security throughout building. Dutch and English spoken. For more info, call (519) 233-7296 or (519) 482-7862.</p>	<p>Take action! Place an ad in our Business Directory.</p>	

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Miscellaneous

Job Opportunities

Job Opportunities



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**NURSERY/GREENHOUSE HELP**

Wholesale nursery, growing ground covers, flowering shrubs, evergreens, flowering vines and perennial flowers will be hiring additional staff for spring. Employment is needed in potting, tagging, shipping, tying and propagation. Work involves both being inside and outside. **Full-time and seasonal employment.** Wages and positions commensurate with experience. Resumes may be dropped off at Willowbrook Nurseries Inc., 1000 Balfour St., Fenwick, ON L0S 1C0, attention Jane Broere.

Principal

The Red Deer Chr. School has a definite opening for a Principal for the 1998/99 school year (to cover a leave of absence). This position includes some teaching responsibilities at the Junior High level. Interested individuals should forward their resumes/applications to the Red Deer Chr. School, 5210-61 Street, Red Deer, AB T4N 6N8; Fax (403) 347-3003. Attention: Mr. R. Duggan, before Feb. 20, 1998. We also have possible openings at the primary, intermediate and junior levels. Interested individuals should forward their resumes/applications to the above address before March 6, 1998.

**Thyroid Disease Awareness**

(NC)—There's a new recently released self-exam for checking for signs of thyroid disease.

Since most thyroid problems can be cured with early diagnosis and treatment, the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists recommends people regularly look for bulges on their neck by doing the following four steps:

- Using a hand mirror, focus on the area of your neck just below the Adam's apple and immediately above the collarbone.
- Focus on the mirror and tip your head back.
- Take a drink of water and swallow.
- As you swallow, look at your neck. Check for any protrusions when you swallow but be careful not to confuse the Adam's apple with the thyroid gland. The thyroid gland is further down your neck.

If you do see any bulges, see your physician. You may have an enlarged thyroid gland or a thyroid nodule and it should be checked by your doctor.

For our calendar of events, please turn to page 19

Job Opportunities

A Burlington, Ont., -based Industrial Contractor requires temporary help for project work in the Windsor-Tilbury, Ont., area for a period of three (3) months, starting mid-February. Experience in general construction, mechanical, structural steel or sheet metal a definite asset.

Wages geared to experience. Job could lead to full-time employment for right individual.

Fax resume to Nyman Bros. Ltd. (905) 634-5591 or call (905) 634-9152.

VICE-PRINCIPAL—PROGRAM

The board of directors at Hamilton District Chr. High School invites qualified administrators or teachers to apply by phone, fax or in writing for the position of Vice-Principal for Program. This new position has been created in response to continuous growth in student numbers and expanded program. The successful candidate should possess the following attributes:

- demonstrates a deep love for our Lord
- possesses a Reformed understanding of the Kingdom
- displays creative skills in the development of high quality curricula
- demonstrates classroom teaching practice as a craft to be honed to perfection
- shows herself or himself to be an empathetic listener and a global thinker
- utilizes strong interpersonal skills in relation to adults and youth
- demonstrates reasonable facility with standard computer software programs
- has a minimum of seven years of teaching experience.

We are situated on a beautiful campus on the edge of the City of Hamilton, Ont., (population 320,000). Due to strong support from Christians in more than 25 denominations, the school boasts a modern building, 500 students and 40 staff members. We believe that "learning to serve the Master together" is a motto worth our total energy.

Hamilton District Christian High School
 92 Glancaster Rd., Ancaster, ON L9G 3K9
 Attention: Conrad Guichelaar,
 Selection Committee Chairperson
 Phone: (905) 648-6655; Fax (905) 648-3139

Please submit your application prior to Feb. 25, 1998. Interviews for selected candidates will be held on Saturday, March 7, 1998. A job description is available upon request.

Calvin College
Education Department

CALVIN
 College


The Calvin College Education Department seeks candidates for a tenure-track position (subject to approval) which primarily involves teaching and advising in the M. Ed. Curriculum and Instruction Program with some duties in the undergraduate teacher education program.

Qualifications include: 1) an earned doctorate (or ABD) in curriculum and instruction; 2) K-12 teaching and/or administration experience; 3) a scholarship agenda; and 4) commitment to a Reformed Christian expression of faith.

Calvin College is a Christian college within the Reformed tradition of historic Christianity and is an equal opportunity employer. The College encourages the application of women and minority candidates. Interested applicants should forward a letter stating qualifications and curriculum vitae to:

Dr. L. Stegink, Department Chair, Education Department, Calvin College, 3201 Burton, S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49546, by March 1, 1998, or until the position is filled.

Classifieds

Job Opportunities

Job Opportunities

Miscellaneous

CHAPLAINCY VACANCY

Geneva Fellowship, a chaplaincy at Queen's University in Kingston, Ont., and funded by the Christian Reformed Church, is seeking male and female applicants to fill a recent chaplaincy vacancy. Located at the university campus, the chaplaincy is uniquely equipped to assist students in engaging, from a Christian perspective, questions of current and academic concern, and to offer spiritual assistance to undergraduate and graduate students, and to university staff and faculty. Ordination is not a prerequisite.

The position will start on **July 1, 1998**. The deadline for applications is **March 31, 1998**. A package containing a detailed description of the position, as well as the application procedures, may be obtained by phoning **Leo Jonker at (613) 545-2402 (work)** or **(613) 389-5440 (home)**, or by sending an e-mail message to: **leo@mast.queensu.ca**

Ottawa Christian School
is seeking applications for the position of

PRINCIPAL

Our school is a vibrant and growing non-denominational community of 180 students and 11 teachers, offering an educational program from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 8. We are looking for an energetic and dynamic leader to direct the operation of the school and outreach into the community. The position includes both teaching and administrative responsibilities.

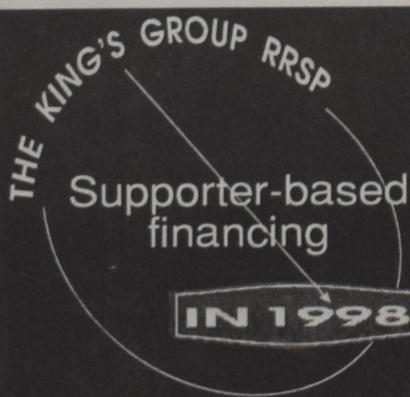
Interested candidates are invited to submit a letter of application and a curriculum vitae before **Feb. 15, 1998**, to:

Principal Search Committee
c/o Mr. L. Vandergrift

937 Alpine Ave., Ottawa, ON K2B 5R9

For further information, please call (613) 820-0272.

Ottawa Christian School is a member of the Ontario
Alliance of Christian Schools.



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For more information or forms, contact Mr. John Rhebergen.



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TEACHER OPENINGS

Abbotsford Chr. School is accepting applications from teachers for openings at its three campuses beginning in the 1998/99 school year. Applicants must support the mission of the school in word and deed and have B.C. teacher certification or quality for it. ACS is an interdenominational parent-run school serving 1200 students at three campuses. Contact the appropriate campus for details.

Clayburn Hills Campus K-7:

- Vice-Principal, with duties in curriculum and staff development (30% + 70% teaching) (closing date for VP, March 5)
- Learning assistance co-ordinator
- Primary grades teacher (1 year term)
- Music teacher (prefer familiarity with Kodaly methodology) 1 year term.

Contact: Ed Noot, Principal
3939 Old Clayburn Rd., Abbotsford, BC V3G 1J9
Phone: (604) 850-2694

Heritage Campus:

- 2.5 positions in Kindergarten, 4, 5 or 6.
- Full-time Special education co-ordinator (closing date, March 5)

Contact: Lloyd Den Boer, Principal
2884 Mission Hwy., Abbotsford, BC V2S 3Y2
Phone: (604) 850-5022

Secondary Campus (8-12):

• Four full-time positions and one part-time one are available in combinations of the following areas: academic and career counselling, choral music (one course), science, math, French, P.E., athletic director, business education, social studies.

Contact: Dwight Moodie, Principal
35011 Old Clayburn Rd., Abbotsford, BC V2S 7L7
Phone: (604) 850-5342

PACIFIC CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
Victoria, B.C.

Come to the beautiful West Coast and join a dynamic and enthusiastic staff in an exciting, interdenominational K-12 school system growing to 750 students in the fall.

TEACHERS REQUIRED FOR 1998/99 SCHOOL YEAR:

- * 2-3 Elementary classroom teachers (grades 1-5)
- * One part-time elementary French & music
- * Secondary art and home economics
- * Secondary girls counsellor
- * Secondary band/choir

Teachers must be committed Christians and certifiable by the B.C. College of Teachers.

Send letter of application, resume and statement of faith to:

Bill Helmus, Elementary Principal
Pacific Christian School
671 Agnes Street
Victoria, BC V8Z 2E7
Phone: (250) 479-9365
Fax: (250) 479-3685

John Messelink, Secondary Principal
Pacific Christian School
654 Agnes Street
Victoria, BC V8Z 2E6
Phone: (250) 479-4532
Fax: (250) 479-3511



JANUARY 1998

THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS ARE REQUESTED TO CONTACT THE CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE NETHERLANDS:

BAKKER, Herke, born September 9, 1972, last known address in Canada: Box 22, Bloomsbury, Alberta.

BANDA, Catharine J.A., born February 27, 1972.

BLOM, Warner G., born February 24, 1971 in Zutphen.

BOOGERD, Leendert Jacobus, born May 29, 1951.

BOUWMAN, Loes, born August 15, 1961, last known address in Canada: 86 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta.

BRASSINGA-CORNELIUS, Hedy Jean, born July 21, 1949, emigrated to Canada in 1973.

van de BROEK, Alfonius C.M., born September 21, 1973 in Baarle-Nassau.

van DIEMEN, Robertus Johannes, born December 13, 1973 in Leiderdorp.

DROST, Peter, born October 28, 1966 in Assen.

DUNK-OPPERMAN, L.R., born October 15, 1960, emigrated to Canada July 1, 1995.

DIJKHUIZEN, Leenderd, born June 9, 1932, last known address in Canada: Vancouver, B.C.

ESSER, Karen Christine, born June 2, 1960 in Oshawa.

HORN, Jan Daniel, born April 8, 1947.

KALKMAN, Arie J., born October 23, 1964.

KANARY, Eric William, born May 25, 1976 in North York, Ontario.

v.d. KERFF, Nicolette J., born July 14, 1970.

van KESTEREN, W., born August 5, 1957.

KRIJNEN, Pamela Maria Wilhelmina, born May 26, 1964, last known address: Fullarton, Ontario.

LANGEDIJK, Martijn W., born April 1, 1971.

LENSTRA, Johannes, born January 26, 1963.

v.d. MEY, Robert E., born February 6, 1971, last known address in Canada: Juniper Avenue, Sherwood Park, Alberta.

MIDDELKAMP, Hendrik Jacob, born March 23, 1978 in Vlaardingen.

PORTER, Shaune, born July 3, 1977 in Fort Saskatchewan.

PRINS-VISSE, Gé Tiny, born June 6, 1941 in Sondel, emigrated to Canada on September 1, 1994.

Classifieds

Miscellaneous

AOW en BEDRIJFSPENSIOEN
Dutch Retirement Consulting Agency

Als U na 1 januari 1957 bent geëmigreerd heeft U mogelijk recht op **AOW** (pensioen). Heeft U of Uw partner in Nederland gewerkt, dan heeft U mogelijk recht op **Bedrijfspensioen**. Wens U hulp, contact: Dutch Retirement Consulting Agency P.O. Box 7544, Grand Rapids, MI 49510 ...of bel één van de volgende nummers: (616) 245-9911, (616) 531-4046/res.

The Woodstock Dutch Theatre Group presents

"Voor Hete Vuren"a three-act comedy
re-written by Ab van der Linden

WOODSTOCK, Ont.: Market Centre Theatre
March 13 and 14 at 8 p.m./Matinee March 14 at 2 p.m.
(advance tickets only for all Woodstock performances)

LONDON, Ont.: Dutch Canadian Hall
March 27 and 28 at 8 p.m.

JORDAN, Ont.: Heritage Christian School
April 4 at 8 p.m.

For tickets to the above performances, send cheque and stamped self-addressed envelope to: Adrian Rodenburg, R.R. 4, Thamesford, ON N0M 2M0, (519) 283-6285.

PETERBOROUGH, Ont.: Adam Scott Collegiate

April 25 at 8 p.m.

For tickets to the above performance, send cheque and stamped self-addressed envelope to: Frank Meevis, 25 Emily Manor Drive, Omemee, ON K0L 2N0, (705) 799-6919.

TICKETS: \$10.00

Calendar of Events

Please submit only brief items. Placement is subject to space availability. Lengthy, multiple-event announcements will be rejected. We reserve the right to edit the material and to charge a nominal, per issue fee per item inserted.

Feb. 14 Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Mich., will host an evening of spiritual and devotional reflection, including music, readings and the visual arts. 8:15 p.m., at the Calvin Chapel. The program "Lift Your Heart to the Lord: A journey with worshipping communities around the world," is sponsored by the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship. Info.: (616) 957-6282.

Feb. 25-28 The 1998 Stone Lectures, featuring Dr. Nicholas Wolterstorff and presentations by five panels of scholars. Topic: "Religion, Pluralism, and the Public Life - Abraham Kuyper's Legacy for the 21st Century." Sponsored by the Princeton Theological Seminary, the Centre for Public Justice, the Free University in Amsterdam and Calvin College. Info.: Phone (410) 571-6300, Fax (410) 571-6365, e-mail: inquiries@cpjustice.org

Feb. 27-Mar. 7 Students of the London Distr. Chr. Secondary School present A Midsummer Night's Dream. Dates: 8 p.m., Feb. 27, 28, March 6 and 7, at LDCSS, London, Ont. Info.: (519) 455-4360.

March 2 1998 Ministers' Conference, 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont. Speaker: Calvin Theological Seminary's Dr. Melvin Hugen on "The Church and Homosexuality — 25 Years Later." Info. and registration: (905) 648-2131 or e-mail to rklein@redeemer.on.ca (#)

March 7 Jennifer and Franklin Famme and Jonathan Oldengarm (piano and organ) in concert, 8 p.m., Trinity United Church, Listowel, Ont.

March 8 Dutch worship service led by Rev. Henry R. De Bolster, 3 p.m., CRC, Ancaster, Ont.

March 13-14 The Woodstock Dutch Theatre Group presents the three-act comedy "Voor Hete Vuren," 8 p.m., Market Centre Theatre, Woodstock, Ont. (Matinee March 14, at 2 p.m.) Tickets/Info.: (519) 283-6285 (#)

March 27-28 The Woodstock Dutch Theatre Group presents the three-act comedy "Voor Hete Vuren," 8 p.m., Dutch Canadian Hall, London, Ont. Tickets/Info.: (519) 283-6285 (#)

April 4 The Woodstock Dutch Theatre Group presents the three-act comedy "Voor Hete Vuren," 8 p.m., Heritage Christian School, Jordan, Ont. Tickets/Info.: (519) 283-6285 (#)

April 10 The 14th annual Dutch Song Service "Komt Nu Met Zang," Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont. Benefit evening for the radio program "Zingend Geloven." Get your tickets early! Info.: (905) 648-3170, fax (905) 648-6071.

April 19 Dutch worship service led by Rev. John D. Hellinga, 3 p.m., CRC, Ancaster, Ont.

Miscellaneous

SERBAN, Peter, born September 14, 1932, emigrated from Helmond on September 2, 1960 to Orono, Ontario.

SHEARER, Douglas Richard, born December 3, 1948, last known address Lethbridge, Alberta.

SMALLENBURG, Jacob Willem, Leendert and Gijsbertje.

van der SPEK, Irene T.A., born April 21, 1967, last known address: Inman Avenue, Burnaby, B.C.

THONUS, Fransje, emigrated to Canada in 1958.

TIMMERMAN, Freddy Margaretha Johannes, born February 10, 1973.

UWLAND, Jacobus J.C., born February 19, 1967.

de VRIES, Kay Ann, born March 9, 1956, daughter of Harm de Vries and Jacamina Weerstra.

WILLE, Dirk, born June 11, 1931 in Kouderkerk a/d Rijn.

ZELDENRUST, Hilje Johanne, born November 5, 1972.

van ZONNEVELD, Frits or Fred, born May 30, 1928, last known address Howard Avenue, Windsor, Ontario.

ZIJLEMA, Geert H., born October 19, 1971.

CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE NETHERLANDS
1 DUNDAS STREET W., SUITE 2106
TORONTO, ONTARIO M5G 1Z3
TEL. (416) 598-2520

Miscellaneous

Development Director

Calgary Chr. School is looking for a Development Director to be responsible for all fundraising aspects, including planning, implementing and co-ordinating volunteer efforts. CCS is a well-established, interdenominational school with 650 students in grades K-12. This position requires someone with fundraising experience, computer skills, preferably Microsoft Office including a database program. We offer a competitive salary and benefit package. Please send resume to:

B. Hrynuik, Assist. Dir. Calgary Chr. School
2839-49 St. S.W., Calgary, AB T3E 3X9
Phone (403) 242-2896; Fax (403) 242-6682
Application deadline is March 13, 1998.

**Thank You!**

This picture of the old CC board was taken during the '80s in the former CC office located on Niagara St., St. Catharines, Ont. From l. to r.: John Bergman, Bill Van Huizen, Bill Vander Kruk, Marinus Koole, Klaas Terpstra, Jim Meyers and Hank Boer. Mr. Terpstra died Dec. 17, 1997.

The board of Reformed Faith Witness and the staff of Christian Courier herewith express sincere thanks to the now retired board members of Calvinist Contact Publishing Limited, particularly Marinus Koole, for their leadership in keeping CC alive during the last 20 years. God bless you all!

(See related story on page 20 of this issue.)

News

Calvinist Contact 'old guard' retires



Outgoing Calvinist Contact board members: clockwise from top left: Hank Boer, William Vander Kruk, John Bergman, Marinus Koole (chairperson), James Meyers and Gary Van Eyk.



Members of the new RFW board: clockwise from top left, Harry Der Nederlanden, Sylvan Gerritsma, Emma Winter, Nelly Westerhoff and Gary Van Eyk (president).

Stan de Jong

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — At the end of 1997, a small group of people with long ties to *Calvinist Contact/Christian Courier* met at the home of one of them, Marinus Koole, in Jordan Station, Ont. They were to close almost two decades in the 52-year history of *Christian Courier* (founded as *Calvinist Contact*) in 1945).

Contact in 1945).

Present at this important meeting were both the long-time directors of *Calvinist Contact Publishing Limited* and the new directors of *Reformed Faith Witness (RFW)*, the non-profit charitable corporation now responsible for publishing *Christian Courier*.

In Marinus Koole's familiar

role as chairperson, he welcomed fellow *Calvinist Contact* board members John Bergman, Hank Boer, James Meyers and William Vander Kruk (William Van Huizen was unable to be present), and the members of the new RFW board: Gary Van Eyk (president), Harry Der Nederlanden, Sylvan Gerritsma, Nelly Westerhoff and Emma Winter.

Also present at the meeting were CC editor Bert Witvoet, business manager Stan de Jong and lawyer Bert Bakker, who had drawn up the resolutions to be passed by both boards which would close the operations of *Calvinist Contact Publishing Limited* and transfer all assets to the new non-profit company.

No course change

That change of hands was the culmination of events which began in 1995 and eventually resulted in the birth of *Reformed Faith Witness*.

Since August 1, 1996, RFW has been able to receive donations and issue tax receipts. Notably, the 1996 campaign yielded almost \$9,000 in donations. The 1997 campaign, which ended Jan. 31, is expected to bring in about \$20,000, some of which has been donated specifically so that CC's outmoded computers could be replaced.

The change in ownership from a private publishing firm to a charitable religious corporation means that *Christian Courier* is now being operated as a non-profit Christian ministry "committed to communicating biblical perspectives on current and world events in accordance with Reformed traditions," as RFW's mission state-

ment puts it. The change has affected neither the make-up of CC's personnel nor the actual running or direction of the paper.

Through the fire

The outgoing *Calvinist Contact* board of directors was installed during the early '80s at a time when the then private company went through serious financial difficulties. Largely due to Marinus Koole's dedication and initiative, a group of Niagara-area people were found willing to underwrite *Calvinist Contact's* bank credit line.

Bert Witvoet became CC's new editor in 1982; in early 1984 Stan de Jong took over as business manager, and Marian Van Til, now associate editor, arrived a few months later. Subscription's manager Grace Bowman is the only current CC employee who was already present near the end of the difficult pre-Witvoet period. CC's other two current employees are more recent arrivals, Ingrid Torn (advertising, layout) in 1991, and Alan Doerksen (journalist, layout) in 1994.

During the early '90s the CC board continued to support the staff as it struggled with the loss of printing jobs due to technological changes and with maintaining CC's subscriber base. Hard work, frugal policies, lay-off of part-time staff and the selling of the old office space in downtown St. Catharines eventually reaped rewards, allowing the company to crawl out from under its debt and steer a steady course for the future.

News Digest

Virtual pet cemetery

BUDAPEST (AP) — What do parents do when a child's Tamagotchi "dies" and the child refuses to throw it out? They take it to the Tamagotchi Cemetery. About 20 pet owners have already done that, bringing their computer critters to the Hungarian village of Dunaszekcse, where a special cemetery has been opened.

In the funeral ceremony, a local says a few words about the owner, how long the virtual pet lived and why it died. "Rest in peace," says the local, as he places a tiny urn containing the pet into a wall donated by a local businessman. But local priest Janos Roman says, "I am deeply indignant about this. They should not make a joke of sacred things."

Christian clowns spread happy news

HAMILTON — The new Christian Clown Canada network wants to spread spiritual messages through humor. A recent "clown college" session in Hamilton attracted 51 people, reports *Faith Today* magazine. Workshop leaders included O. B. Joyfull Jahn of Dumont, N.J., president of Cheerleaders for Christ.

"This is a first in Canada," says David Milmine of Hamilton, a Dofasco steelworker who has been clowning for 26 years. "We don't merely dramatize Bible stories, we illustrate spiritual truths that make people think."

Good news about divorce

WASHINGTON, D.C. — One way to cut the divorce rate is to require divorced parents to share custody of a child, rather than give custody to just one parent, say Richard Kuhn of the Children's Rights Council and John Guidubaldi of Kent State University. According to them, divorce rates are plummeting in states where courts typically award custody of children to both parents. But states that have policies favoring sole custody have significantly more divorces involving couples who have children, reports the *Washington Post*.

Overall, divorce rates declined nearly four times faster in high joint custody states compared with states where joint custody is rare, based on information from 19 states.